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HURRAH FOR PARIS!

—:O:—

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M. SAVIGNY.

BRUNO, *His Valet.*

HENRIETTE, M. SAVIGNY'S *Wife.*

—

COSTUMES. — MODERN.

—

PROPERTIES.

Curtains to French window. Screen. Piano. Round table, with cover, R. A smaller table, with handbell on it, L. Cabinet with bric-a-brac. Easy chair, stools, and other chairs. Easel, with picture on it covered by a shawl. Small table opposite window. Two hats and hat-brush on it. Newspapers. Photograph in case. Another photograph the same size. Large plum bun. A pile of books and blotting-book on table. Statuette, Venice glass. Feather duster. Articles of gentlemen's wearing apparel in cabinet. Small trunk, filled with toys, discovered on stage, L. A large Polichinelle under round table R. Two letters. Account book.

—

EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means first entrance right and right. L., first entrance left and left. S.E.R., second entrance right. S.E.L., second entrance left. T.E.R., third entrance right. T.E.L., third entrance left. F.E.R., fourth entrance right. F.E.L., fourth entrance left. U.E.R., upper entrance right. U.E.L., upper entrance left. R.F., right flat. L.F., left flat. R.C., right of centre. L.C., left of centre. C., centre. C.D., centre doors. C.R., centre towards right. C.L., centre towards left. Observing you are supposed to face the audience.

HURRAH FOR PARIS.

SCENE.—*A Drawing-Room. Centre doors. Doors S.E.R. and S.E.L. French window, U.E.L. Screen before door S.E.L. Piano, R. at back. Table R.C. Cabinet, with bric-a-brac, L. at back. Easel in the middle of stage, halfway back; on the easel a picture covered by a shawl. Easy chair, stools, chairs, &c. Small table opposite window, L., on which are hats and a hat brush.*

M. SAVIGNY *discovered standing before the easel; he lifts the shawl, and looks at the portrait.*

Savigny. Dear little Paul! He seems to smile at me. I am satisfied at last. Though painted from memory, I have caught the likeness admirably.

Enter BRUNO, c. door.

Savigny. Is that you, Bruno?

(Covers the picture hastily, and sits R.C.)

Bruno. Yes, sir, I took the liberty of bringing the newspapers.

(Down L.C.)

Savigny. *(Glancing at them.)* The Sylph! Journal of Fashion! Bruno, these are for Madame.

Bruno. That's true! *(Aside.)* See what it is to think forever of my Adelaide.

Savigny. Is Madame at the baths?

Bruno. Yes, for the last fifty-nine minutes.

Savigny. How does she feel to-day?

Bruno. I can't say how *she* feels, Monsieur, but *I* feel that she is very poorly.

Savigny. Why do you say that?

Bruno. Hasn't monsieur observed, as I have, that the climate of Belgium is far from beneficial to a lady of Madame's temperament?

Savigny. This is the first I've heard of it.

Bruno. Ever since Madame came to Spa she has grown weaker and weaker; her appetite is gone, her eyes are dim, she is very pale, she has, at times, a dry, hacking cough.

Savigny. You've lost your senses, Bruno. I see none of these alarming symptoms.

Bruno. Monsieur may be right, but I must say that I think the air of Paris, the good, healthy air of Paris, would be very much better for—

Savigny. (*Laughs.*) What fee do you charge, Dr. Bruno?

Bruno. (*Seriously.*) None at all, sir. I give you my advice free—gratis—without charge for nothink! (*Sighs.*)

Savigny. Thank you! I am going to the studio for half an hour. I shall be back to breakfast. Give me my gray hat. (*BRUNO brings a black hat from the table L.*) My good fellow, when I want a black hat I will ask for it.

(*Goes himself and gets the gray hat; is about to leave the room, but returns towards BRUNO.*)

Bruno. I know what monsieur is going to say. "Bruno, don't touch the little shawl that covers the picture." Monsieur doesn't appreciate me. I'm not one of the fellows that finger everything. (*Aside.*) I'd rather touch nothing. It's much less fatiguing.

Savigny. Brush this hat.

Bruno. (*Takes a brush from L. table, and brushing hard the wrong way.*) Every morning when monsieur goes out, he says—over and over again—"don't!" (*Drops the hat.*) Madame will be very careful how she uncovers *this* picture, after her unfortunate curiosity about the last, the one monsieur called the "Aboriginal," or some such name. He kept it veiled like this one. (*Drops the hat.*) Madame, a true daughter of Eve, couldn't stand that. She'd forgotten all about Bluebeard; so, in spite of the prohibition—probably because of it—she lifted the veil and saw—well, we won't say what. (*Drops the hat—aside.*) Hang this hat! Wasn't Monsieur angry, and wasn't Madame confused!

Savigny. (*Picks up the hat, and takes the brush from BRUNO.*) Give it to me, you will never through with it.

Bruno. Is this a companion picture, sir? (*SAVIGNY exits c., without answering.*) He didn't hear me. At last! Here I am alone! (*Sits down in an arm chair.*) Now I can think about my Adelaide. Oh! (*To the audience.*) You don't know my Adelaide? Well, that's a pity! Imagine an angel. I'll show you her photograph. (*Takes two photographs from his pocket; shows one to the audience.*)

There she is, in the costume of a comet, just as she looked the night I took her to a masked ball, like a ray of light. Her dress had a spangled tail—there it is! (*Looks tenderly at the photograph.*) And here's mine (*shows the other*) as a Circassian nobleman. I was living then with M. Maurice (Madame's cousin), and I borrowed the dress of him—that is, I took it. I did look wonderfully handsome in it. You should have seen my false beard! In a moment of enthusiasm Adelaide kissed me. (*Clasping his hands.*) Adelaide, oh! And then she promised to marry me in a month. Now, see my luck! Before the month expired Madame was taken I'll, and that idiot of a doctor sent her off to Spa. She couldn't go without me, of course, and here I am a hundred thousand miles from Adelaide—more or less! Oh! (*Takes an enormous plum-bum out of his pocket, and begins to eat.*) They say love is calculated to destroy one's appetite. It improves mine. (*Eating voraciously.*) This separation is killing me! I am trying now to make them turn me off. (*With his mouth full.*) I do the most provoking things. I lose half their property, I break everything I touch. I'm very insolent. I never answer the bell. No use! You would really think that Monsieur and Madame had no eyes, no ears, nor tempers. I mean to bring matters to a crisis to-day. I've got to think of some new and intolerable performance. (*Bell rings*) There's Madame! (*Bell again; he does not stir.*) Impatient, is she? (*Bell louder than before.*) Madame was sent to Spa to calm her nerves! (*Bell rings violently again and again.*) The waters haven't done her a bit of good. (*Sits in an arm-chair.*) I know that from her way of ringing.

Enter HENRIETTE, door S.E.R.

Henriette. (*Speaks mildly.*) Bruno, Bruno, are you deaf?

Bruno. Not yet, madame.

Henriette. What are you doing there? You were asleep?

Bruno. Oh, no, madame. I was trying to think.

(*Mysteriously pantomimes with his fingers.*)

Henriette. What do you say?

Bruno. (*Checking himself.*) I said I was putting things to rights! (*Crosses to L.*)

Henriette. (*Smiling at the appearance of the room.*) Or wrongs!

Bruno. (*Testily.*) I was putting things to rights as much as I can in a room where I'm forbidden to touch anything. (*Aside.*) She is awfully nervous. Now is the time to strike.

Henriette, (R.) Help me to clear this table.

Bruno. (L.) I obey, madame, but I protest. (*Takes a pile of books in his apron—drops half—as he picks them up, drops the other half.*) Formerly, before I came to Monsieur Savigny, I lived with another painter, who had a young lady, a model, there every day—she never dared to touch Monsieur's things.

Henriette. That is quite another matter. I am the wife of M. Savigny.

Bruno. (Aside.) That's a mighty poor reason!

Henriette. Have my newspapers come?

Bruno. (Taking them from his pocket.) Here they are, madame,

Henriette. Journal of Fine Arts! The Archæologist!

Bruno. Beg pardon, my head is topsy-turvy. *Here* are madame's papers. *(Giving her those which are on the table.)* Madame, might I say a few words?

Henriette. What is it?

Bruno. Does madame like the way I brush her boots?

Henriette. Not very well. Here, take this blotting-book.

Bruno. Do I take proper care of Monsieur's clothes?

Henriette. Indeed you do not; you neglect them sadly.

Bruno. Don't I? It's very sad. I have ruined your new kid boots, and as for the buttons on Monsieur's coat, I literally mow them off. It's infamous—that's the word, *infamous!*

Henriette. Try to do better, that's all. Pass me that statuette.

Bruno. (Giving her the statuette.) And the way I wait at table! It is pitiable! Madame must remember how I smashed that pile of plates—old Sevres—just as easily as if it were earthenware! And that macaroni I spilt on Monsieur's head! And the curry I toppled over into the custard! Such a waste, too! Nobody could eat the curry, and nobody could eat the custard. If I were Monsieur and Madame I should send me flying through the window.

Henriette. What do you mean, Bruno?

Bruno. Why *this!* That my heart is elsewhere. Question, Why did I come to live with madame? Answer, To be near my Adelaide!

(Strikes an attitude.)

Henriette. (Smiling.) And to break my plates?

Bruno. (Absent-mindedly.) Yes, to break your plates—that is, no, no, to see my Adelaide at all hours. She is lady's maid to the lady that lives opposite to madame. Well, what was the end of it? I'd no sooner settled myself in madame's house before madame carried me off to Belgium, three hundred and ninety-nine miles *and a half* from Paris. I've measured it. I want to know from madame herself how long she wants to stay at Spa.

Henriette. Till I am cured.

Bruno. When will that be?

Henriette. After twenty-two baths.

Bruno. And madame has taken?

Henriette. Seven.

Bruno. Only seven! *(Aside.)* Take seven from twenty-two, fifteen remain. Condemned to fifteen more days of anguish! I can never bear it. Three hundred and sixty-five hours before I see my Adelaide. Oh, impossible! The hairs of my heart are turning white. *(Aloud.)* Can't I make madame get rid of me?

Henriette. Take care of this Venice glass, I value it.

Bruno. (Taking it from HENRIETTE.) I am sure madame didn't pay a cent less than she could have bought it for it Paris, and then

the tronble of taking it home and the duties. (*Drops the glass, which breaks to pieces.*) Ta-ta-ta!

Henriette. (*Gently.*) Oh, my poor glass!

Bruno. (*Violently.*) It wasn't my fault! The obstinate thing would slip through my fingers. Madame needn't call me an idiot, a careless fellow! Am I to put up with abuse? It's too bad! I'd rather give warning at once than be treated like the scum of the earth!

Henriette. (*Astonished.*) Do you want to leave us? Well, then, give me your account-book.

Bruno. (*Taking it out of his pocket.*) Here it is! (*Aside, joyfully.*) There! I've done it now! I'm free, free!

Henriette. Bruno, I am sorry for you. I will overlook your conduct. I should be grieved to break off your marriage. You can stay. Your Adelaide is, no doubt, an honest girl, and would not marry a man dismissed from a good place.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) That's true! I never thought of that! Change of base! In nautical language, I'll luff! (*Aloud.*) Madame will please pardon a moment of—of nervous excitement. She may be quite sure that in future—

Henriette. (*Smiling.*) You will break rather more than usual!

Bruno. (*Seriously.*) That was not exactly what I meant to say.

Henriette. (*Laughing.*) I should hope not.

(*Begins to look over her newspaper.*)

Bruno. (*Aside.*) The wisest thing to do would be to drive madame herself back to Paris. Difficult! More difficult than smashing china!

Henriette. Bruno! (*Aside.*) What an odd servant!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) If I only knew how to get at her cousin Maurice, I'd let him know we were here. He'd come, fast enough. Monsieur is a little jealous of him. Oh, as jealous as Madame is of that little actress at the Palais-Royal, Jealousy! Ah, what a blessing in families. One never knows happiness until he's had the jaundice!

Henriette. Bruno! (*Aside.*) He is in the clouds!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Monsieur would get in a fine state of mind, and whirl us back to Paris by the first train. Yes, but how can I manage it? (*Reflects.*) I have it! The photograph of my Adelaide! Oh! Ah! Here it goes into the pocket of Monsieur's overcoat! (*Puts the photograph into the pocket.*) That's enough for Madame's jealousy. That's the green-eyed lobster Madame will partake of, as Shakespeare says. That will do her business, while my photograph shall drive Monsieur crazy. Capital! It won't be long before the house is a lunatic asylum!

Henriette. (*Looking up from her paper.*) Bruno! What are you doing?

Bruno. I am brushing Monsieur's overcoat. (*Holds the coat up-*

side down, and divers papers and the photograph fall out of the pockets and scatter about.) Well done, stupid!

Henriette. Another awkwardness!

Bruno. I'm incorrigible! What would Monsieur say if he were here?

Henriette. (*Picking up photograph.*) Whose likeness is this? I don't know it.

Bruno. Monsieur has had it some months.

Henriette. (*Looking at it.*) I can't recall the face.

Bruno. (*Looking over HENRIETTE'S shoulder, and speaking aside.*) Attention! I open fire. (*Aloud.*) It looks like some celebrity. An actress, perhaps, at the Folies-Marigny, or (*pointedly*) the Palais-Royal.

Henriette. (*Quickly.*) The Palais-Royal!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Look out!

Henriette. Bruno, were you ever at the Palais-Royal?

Bruno. Yes, Madame, a hundred times.

Henriette. Do you know an actress named Lise Bluet?

Bruno. Yes, but not so well as some gentlemen who—

Henriette. (*Quickly.*) Enough!

Bruno. (*Looking at the photograph.*) Madame is right. There is something, but *this* one is rather more—no, perhaps rather less—

Henriette. (*With agitation.*) He still thinks of her!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Jealousy! There's the lobster! I told you so! (*SAVIGNY speaks outside c.—Aloud.*) Here's Monsieur coming in to breakfast, and I haven't brushed his overcoat. (*Aside.*) The clouds are gathering, the storm's brewing! Thunder! Lightning! A blow-up!

(*Exit S.E.L.*)

Enter M. SAVIGNY, from c. door.

Henriette. (*n.c., aside.*) I will make him own it. Here he is!

Savigny. (*L.C.*) Well, my darling, why don't you kiss me for good morning?

Henriette. (*Aside.*) Excuse me.

Savigny. How are you to-day?

Henriette. Very ill—that's to say, very well!

Savigny. Does your head ache?

Henriette. No! (*SAVIGNY rings the bell.*)

Re-enter BRUNO, instantly, S.E.L.

Savigny. (*To BRUNO.*) Has anything come for me?

Bruno. No, monsieur, nothink!

Savigny. Strange! I expected a letter.

Henriette. (*Quickly.*) From your mother, no doubt?

Savigny. No, the Paris mail was in long ago. From Gaston, at Vichy.

Bruno. (*Aside—a little up L.*) Ho, M. Gaston is at Vichy! I'm glad to know it.

Henriette. (*Aside.*) Vichy! Ah! (*Aloud.*) Vichy is a charming place, is it not?

Savigny. Charming!

Henriette. You went there often before our marriage, didn't you?

Savigny. For the waters, yes; but now my health is perfect, thanks to you and——

Henriette. (*Nervously.*) Wasn't it at Vichy that the Palais-Royal troupe was playing two years ago?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. Did you go to the theatre?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. Every night?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. (*More and more nervous.*) Then, perhaps, you saw a certain actress named Lise Bluet, more remarkable for the innocence of her name and the beauty of her face than for her talents?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. Did you hear of a duel about this—lady, between a celebrated literary man and a young artist who expects to be celebrated.

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. The artist was wounded; but I am told he triumphed in other ways, he won the lady?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. An actress! There's a name invented, I believe, for just such actresses—women without talent, only engaged for their pretty faces?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. They are called utility actresses are they not?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. Their utility is displayed in striking tableaux, is it not? In fêtes, and fiery scenes. They wear strange fancy-dresses—beginning late and ending early—such as the White Cat, the Rain of Gold, a Salad-Dressing, often a Star, a Constellation, *sometimes a—Comet!*

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. (*Showing him the photograph.*) Don't you think it very like her?

Savigny. No.

Henriette. (*Growing excited.*) Why have you never taken me to the Palais-Royal? I know young girls can't go there, but is there any reason why a married woman shouldn't enjoy good acting?

Savigny. No.

Henriette. (*Irritated.*) Why have you never told me anything about your affairs? Why didn't you tell me about your duel about that lady? Do you suppose I should be such a fool as to be jealous of the past?

Savigny. No.

Bruno. Oh, no! (*SAVIGNY turns indignantly—BRUNO turns aside.*) Oh, yes!

Henriette. (*Explosively.*) Then you are much mistaken! I am jealous, very jealous of your late romance; simply because you never told me about it. Ah, you haven't got to the last chapter of it yet, or you wouldn't keep her photograph in your pocket next your heart!

Savigny. I don't keep her photograph for the good reason that I never had it.

Henriette. A likely story!

Savigny. It may not be likely, but it is true.

Henriette. Then may I ask how I happened to find it on the floor just where Bruno was brushing your overcoat? Bruno saw it too!

Savigny. For heaven's sake don't bring Bruno into this discussion. (*Perceives BRUNO, who during this dialogue has been grinning at door, S.E.L., and making signs.*) What are you doing here?

Bruno. I'm waiting till monsieur tells me to go.

Savigny. Begone!

Bruno. I'm gone!

(*Exit S.E.L.*)

Savigny. (*To HENRIETTE, who sits down.*) Now, Henriette, listen to me. I don't know how this picture got here, but I swear to you—

Henriette. That it is not the portrait of Mademoiselle Lise Bluet?

Savigny. Yes.

Henriette. Well, if it is not Mademoiselle Lise Bluet, who is it then?

Savigny. I don't know anything about it.

Henriette. You are a very poor deceiver.

Savigny. I'll try to improve.

Henriette. I assert positively that that is the portrait of your old flame developed into a comet!

Savigny. You are mistaken,

Henriette. Prove it by giving me that photograph for my album.

Savigny. To be sure, take it! (*Gives it to her.*)

Henriette. I understand! You have plenty more!

Savigny. (*Impatiently.*) Come, put an end to this!

Henriette. Oh, you are angry, are you? I've touched the right spot at last. I shall retire to my room. (*SAVIGNY does not stir.*) I forbid you to follow me. (*He does not move.*) Ah, I will be revenged!

(*Exit S.E.R.*)

Re-enter BRUNO, S.E.L., feather-duster in hand, and pretending to dust the furniture.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) We are getting on finely! That lobster's three parts cooked! At this rate we shall be off to Paris this evening. Ah, she little knows what awaits her, my Adelaide.

(*Flourishing his feathers.*)

Savigny. (*Much agitated, and stalking hastily up and down, BRUNO following him.*) Life will be intolerable—making me such a scene—to me, a model husband!

Bruno. (*Aside, following him step by step.*) Oood, I tell that to Madame after we get to Paris.

Savigny. (*Still walking.*) But if I'm to have the odium of it, I'll make up for lost time.

Bruno. (*Aside, following.*) I sha'n't tell that to Madame.

Savigny. (*Still walking.*) Henriette is good, I know that, but she is passionate and jealous to excess.

Bruno. (*Aside, still following.*) He's not jealous? Oh, no! A regular Othello, minus the blacking!

Savigny. (*Walking faster than ever.*) If I don't put a stop to this, our home will become a hell! Suppose, to punish her, I were to go off to Vichy with Gaston?

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Bless him! Then Madame and I will go to Paris.

Savigny. (*Stopping short and reflecting.*) No! Anger is a vile counsellor. Henriette is young and inexperienced. I ought to consider her jealousy a proof of love. An honest, straight-forward explanation is the right thing.

Bruno. (*Who has stopped short behind him—Aside.*) No, no, I'm opposed to that.

Savigny. (*Walking again.*) I'll take the first step. She'll thank me for it. (*Goes to HENRIETTE'S door, S.E.R., and knocks.*)

Henriette. (*Within, S.E.R.*) I'm not at home—I'm out.

Savigny. (*Smiling.*) Still furious! Bruno! Bruno!

(*Turns suddenly, and runs against BRUNO.*)

Bruno. Here I am, sir, at your heels!

Savigny. And what are you doing at my heels, sirrah?

Bruno. (*R.*) Waiting orders.

Savigny. Well, give me something to write with. (*Aside.*) I've been to hasty! Half a dozen kind words, and all will be forgotten.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) We'll see about that! My portrait—from Circassia—will put a flea in his ear! That will make him hop! The male and female lobster will be at it then. *I want to go to Paris, and I mean to go to Paris.* (*Slips his photograph into HENRIETTE'S blotting-book and arranges it on the table.*) Here is all monsieur wants—pens, paper, ink—(*Aside*)—and a portrait which he doesn't want.

Savigny. Very good! (*Opens the blotter and sees the photograph.*) What's that?

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Beginning of the second chapter!

Savigny. A strange face among my wife's papers!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) A strange face, indeed! Not as strange as he thinks for. Attention! I'm going to charge! (*Aloud.*) It's a handsome gentleman disguised as a Circassian—from Circassia.

Hasn't Madame got a cousin who travelled in those parts? Perhaps it's he.

Savigny. You're a fool!

Bruno. (*Aside, laughing.*) Not I!

Savigny. (*Aside.*) The fellow may be right, after all! I have only seen that Maurice once, and then at a distance, but I could swear to his carrotty red beard. (*Aloud.*) Well, he's an ugly brute!

Bruno. (*Aside, discomfited.*) Hang him, he is blinded with jealousy!

Savigny. Henriette loved him before she knew me. They were engaged when she was a mere girl. There's a good deal in first love! It's tenacious as the devil!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) That's the way I loved my Adelaide! In her swaddling clothes, and nothing can extirpate her image from my heart!

Savigny. But if she loves him, why put on that jealousy of me? Was it a ruse? Did she hope to drive me away? To get rid of me? Yes! No doubt the cousin is here waiting a favorable moment.

Bruno. (*Nodding—aside.*) Hi, do you see the green-eyed monster hopping round? Hi, hi—st' boy!

Savigny. (*Turning round.*) Bruno, tell Madame I wish to speak to her at once—at once, do you hear? (*HENRIETTE opens door S.E.R.*)

Bruno. Monsieur, here is Madame.

Enter HENRIETTE, door S.E.R.

Savigny. Very good; begone! (*Aside.*) Now for a tête-à-tête.

Bruno. (*Aside, pointing to the screen.*) A triangular tête-à-tête, if you please, sir. I'm not to be left out in the cold.

(*Exit S.E.R.—Comes back instantly and slips behind the screen.*)

Henriette. (R) I have reflected soberly. I beg you to pardon my late excitement which was hasty and ill-advised. My sense of propriety forbids me to place the portrait of a—Lise Bluet in my album beside those of your mother and sister. I have, therefore, the honor to return it.

Bruno. (*Popping his head above the screen.*) A first-rate observatory!

Savigny. (*Sharply.*) A good offer, madame; we will now make an exchange.

Henriette. I don't understand you.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) I do!

Savigny. Give and take! For me, that picture—for you, *this one!*

(*Gives her the photograph of BRUNO.*)

Henriette. A portrait! Whose portrait, if you please?

Savigny. You ought to know better than I do. I found it in your blotting-book.

Henriette. Ah, indeed! So you condescend to spy among my papers!

Bruno. (Aside.) Pretty good that!

Savigny. By accident, I assure you.

Bruno. (Aside.) That's me! I'm the accident!

Henriette. I wish I could believe you, sir. The whole charge is absurd.

Savigny. Absurd? Do you mean to say you deny that this photograph belongs to you? I might have known you would! You have forgotten that I am well aware your cousin Maurice went to a ball at the Turkish Embassy in that very dress.

Bruno. (Aside.) The crash is coming!

Savigny. (Violently.) As a Circassian, and *that is he!*

Bruno. (Aside.) Is it?

Savigny. It is much flattered, but I recognised it instantly.

Henriette. (Looks at it smiling.) It is my cousin?

Savigny. (Furiously.) You confess it?

Henriette. I? Not at all! I said, it is my cousin? Note of interrogation—as if I had said, do you think it is my cousin?

Savigny. Don't equivocate. You owned it!

Henriette. Well, if you insist; oh, certainly—yes!

Bruno. (Aside.) Well, that's queer! *She* recognises him too!

Savigny. (With an angry gesture, flinging himself into an arm-chair.) I now understand—fully understand—your late threats.

Bruno. (Aside.) What a fool I am! *She* is only tricking him!

Henriette. (Aside.) I don't know where the picture came from, but if it will only make him jealous, I'll profit by it!

Savigny. (Rising, and speaking bitterly.) Madame, if you regret that you are my wife, it would have been honest, it would have been loyal to have told me so, but to leave about—in your blotting-book—in this shameless way a portrait.

Henriette. (Ironically.) Evil communications corrupt good manners, a bad example, sir, is contagious!

Savigny. (Furious.) I see your little game, madame!

Henriette. I can guess yours!

Bruno. (Aside.) Hot and heavy! I'll keep out of range!

Savigny. As Monsieur Maurice possesses your love——

Henriette. If Mademoiselle Lise Bluet occupies your heart——

Savigny. Let us make an end of it!

Henriette. Yes, let us make an end of it!

Bruno. (Aside.) I'm glad of that! I'm getting tired!

Henriette. In our position there is but one word to say.

Savigny. Say it, if you dare.

Henriette. And why shouldn't I dare?

Bruno. (Aside.) Precisely; why shouldn't she dare? I dare do all that may become a woman! Booh!

Henriette. The word is synonymous with freedom, with deliverance.

Savigny. Well, then, say it! I am waiting!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) We are waiting!

Henriette. With impatience!

Savigny. With resignation!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) With anxiety!

Henriette. Well, then, (*pausing*) let us separate!

Bruno. (*Aside, waving his feathers.*) Here we are at last!

Savigny. (*Bitterly.*) I forget that women have every courage except the courage they ought to have!

Henriette. (*Boying.*) I start for Paris immediately.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) I'll go and pack my trunk in a big bandanna handkerchief! (*Exit S.E.L.*)

Henriette. To-morrow I shall sleep once more under my mother's roof!

Savigny. My lawyer shall meet you there. Do not fear, madame, you shall be well provided for.

Henriette. How very amiable! Will you excuse me? I must pack my trunks. (*Sarcastically.*) You may inspect them before I leave, if you wish it.

Savigny. I take the two o'clock train for Vichy. Gaston expects me.

Henriette. Ah, true, the Palais-Royal *troupe* is now there.

Savigny. Thank you for the information.

Henriette. You were ignorant of it?

Savigny. Perfectly!

Henriette. (*Looking about the room and crossing to cabinet, U.E.L.*) I had better make two piles, of the things that belong to you and the things that belong to me. Here are your colors—your easel.

Savigny. (*R.*) Don't touch that picture!

Henriette. (*Pointedly.*) You need not be so frightened. Here are your portfolios.

Savigny. Where are my shirts, my—

Henriette. Pardon me! If I am no longer your wife, such things cannot be mentioned before me. Here is your—your linen, your coats, your dressing-gown—

(*Throws everything in a heap on the floor.*)

Savigny. Would it be a liberty if I ask you to handle my things more carefully?

Henriette. Oh, no! There! Now we have only to divide the bric-à-brac, which we collected on our journey. Whom does this statuette belong to?

Savigny. To you; you brought it at Brussels for sixty francs.

Henriette. Yes, but I had only thirty francs in my purse—you paid the rest. It belongs, therefore, to us. What's to be done?

Savigny. (*Politely.*) Keep it!

Henriette. (*With dignity.*) I wish to have what is mine, and nothing that is *not* mine.

Savigny. There is one way—violent, but decisive. (*Takes a knife and cuts the statuette in two.*) I've cut the Gordian knot.

Henriette. Solomon himself couldn't do better.

Savigny. (*With knife in one hand and statuette in the other.*) Which end will you have? Heads or tails?

Henriette. I have no preference. But time presses.

(*Rings the bell.*)

Re-enter BRUNO, S.E.L.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Good heavens, a knife in his hand! Oh, this is going too far! (*Aloud.*) Did madame ring for help!

Henriette. Nonsense! Call a cab.

Savigny. Call two.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) They're at daggers drawn, and if they attempt to be reconciled, I've (*slyly*) got a little game. I sha'n't tell anything more.

(*Exit S.E.L.*)

Savigny. The die is cast!

Henriette. Yes, cast. (*Aside.*) Not a regret!

Savigny. (*Aside.*) Not one tear! (*Aloud.*) So, then, madame, you leave me with a smile upon your lips, hypocrisy in your eyes and in your heart. False wife, you have deceived me; unworthy mother, you desert your offspring, that little blonde angel!

Henriette. (*Choking with anger.*) What infamous language!

Savigny. You have forgotten your child for the last three months. Do you want a proof of it? We have been in Holland, Bohemia, even Bavaria—the land of toys—and you never once thought of our little Paul. You have not sent him the smallest plaything.

Re-enter BRUNO, S.E.L., and hides behind the screen.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) My packing is done. Let's see how they are getting on.

Henriette. Here is my answer.

(*Opens a little trunk filled with toys and spills them out over the floor.*)

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Bless us!

Savigny. You meant to give them privately! Ah, I recognize you there. You hoped to wean the love of that little angel from his father!

Henriette. That little angel, as you call him, hasn't been much in your thoughts. You were three days at Nuremberg, and you did not even buy him a Polichinelle!

Savigny. I make answer! (*Draws from under the table an enormous Polichinelle.*) Behold!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) My gracious, what a Pollysheneel! That's big enough to reconcile them! I shall have to play my great card!

Henriette. So you kept it hidden! Perhaps your intentions were worse than mine.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Now then, attention! Charge of the third brigade! (*Knocks with the handle of his feather-duster on the door, and pretends to enter—Aloud, c.*) Monsieur! (*Shows a letter in the palm of his hand, and makes believe to hide it as soon as HENRIETTE sees it.*) Madame!

(*Holds up another for her, and hides it as soon as M. SAVIGNY looks at it.*)

Savigny. What's all this telegraphing?

Bruno. (*Dropping his eyes as if confused.*) Well, I can't say. I—I—oh! I'm no hand at diplomatics. I'd rather own everything. The truth is, two persons came here and gave me letters—a letter for madame and a letter for monsieur—and one of them said, "Bruno, my lad, give it to madame when monsieur's back is turned;" and the other said, "Give it to monsieur (*prodigious wink*) when madame's gone to bed." But I'm an honest fellow. I'm no hand at deceit.

Henriette. Give them to me! (*BRUNO gives a letter to each.*)

Savigny. And go!

Bruno. Oph, off! (*Crosses to L.—aside.*) If they make it up after that, I'll eat my feather-duster.

(*Exit S.E.L.—Comes back and pops behind the screen.*)

Savigny. (*Aside, looking at the note in HENRIETTE'S hand.*) It must be from Maurice!

Henriette. (*Aside, looking at the note in M. SAVIGNY'S hand.*) The audacity of that Lise Bluet!

Savigny. You are not reading your mysterious letter?

Henriette. I might say the same thing of you.

Savigny. Curiosity is not my vice.

Henriette. You have no vices.

Savigny. (*Bowing low.*) Too good!

Henriette. Permit me to remark that you are not at all gallant. Your billet-doux is doubtless from that—that lady (*scornfully*) who awaits you at Vichy.

Savigny. Possibly! Pray attend to your own.

(*Points to the letter in her hand.*)

Henriette. By and by.

Savigny. Why not now?

Henriette. Curiosity is not one of my defects.

Savigny. You have no defects.

Henriette. (*Cartseying profoundly.*) Too good! Why don't you tell me this note if from my cousin Maurice?

Savigny. I may not say it, but I think it.

Henriette. Perhaps you are right. (*Moves away, up L.*)

Savigny. Where are you going?

Henriette. To the window, to read it.

Savigny. To hide your emotion!

Henriette. At the point we have reached, why need I hide my emotion? Why need I feel any?

Savigny. Very true! You are flying in the face of all decency.

Henriette. How charming!

Savigny. (To HENRIETTE, who is moving away.) Stay! I command you!

Bruno. (Suddenly appearing behind the screen—*Aside.*) It's getting dramatic!

Savigny. You shall not leave the room. So long as we are not separated, I am your master, because I am your husband.

Henriette. (In a biting tone.) And because you are the strongest.

Savigny. Give me that letter.

Henriette. I shall do no such thing! You can try force if you like.

(M. SAVIGNY shrugs his shoulders. The cracking of whips is heard.)

Savigny. Here are the cabs!

Bruno. (*Aside.*) My! I am glad of it!

Henriette. May I ask you for my cashmere shawl?

(Points to the one which covers the picture.)

Savigny. Take it, madam,

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Now we'll get to the bottom of that mystery!

Henriette. (Speaking rapidly.) I have sworn never to go near that easel. I keep my oaths. Do you think I would expose myself to the risk of looking at that picture? Never! I know very well what it is! The portrait of Mademoiselle Lise Bluet, enlarged, improved, but (with tremendous sarcasm) not corrected. (Without replying, M. SAVIGNY removes the shawl.) Oh, oh, Paul, my little son! He looks at me, he smiles, he seems to speak to me!

(Covers her face.)

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Hang it, there's all my scaffolding down! No, stop! The letters—they'll do the business. Patience, Iago, patience!

Henriette. (To SAVIGNY.) And I accused you so shamefully! But how could you make such a likeness from memory?

Savigny. Dear boy! I see him with the eyes of my heart.

Henriette. Ah, my friend, forgive me; forgive my injustice, my ill temper. And as for those villainous letters, here's mine.

Savigny. Here's mine: read it.

Henriette. Let's read them together.

Bruno. (*Aside.*) Now for my hour of triumph! (Folds his arms above the screen and looks up.) There's a tableau—Ajax defying the lightning!

Savigny & Henriette. (With peals of laughter.) Delicious!

Bruno. (Aside.) What are they laughing at? They ought not to laugh. That's not in the programme!

Henriette. (Reading.) "Sir, Monsieur Maurice de Trany has just arrived at Spa. Be on your guard. *A friend to husbands.*" Poor Maurice!

Savigny. (Reading.) "Take care, Madame. Mademoiselle Lise Bluet, actress at the Palais-Royal, has been fortyate hours in this town. *A friend to wives.*" (*Laughing.*) That poor Lise Bluet!

Henriette. It's a joke.

Savigny. It's a wager.

Henriette. That way of spelling forty-eight—(*Spelling it*)—f-o-u-r-t-y-a-t-e—is not altogether unknown to me.

Savigny. I'll call Bruno. (*Bruno hastily exits S.E.L.*) We can find out through him who brought the letters. (*Rings the bell.*)

Henriette. Behold the fate of cousin Maurice!

Savigny. See how I value Mademoiselle Lise Bluet!

(*They tear up the photographs at the same momst.*)

Re-enter BRUNO, door S.E.L.

Bruno. Did madame ring? (*Sees the pictures in pieces.*) Good heavens, my Adelaide in halves! Oh! And that poor Bruno in quarters! Ah, oh, ah! I shall have the jaundice directly!

Savigny. What's all this?

Henriette. He has made a fool of us! (*Picking up BRUNO's account-book, and turning over the leaves.*) See here! "One pound of wax candles fortyate sous." (*Shows BRUNO the book and the anonymous letter.*) They are the same handwriting, Bruno.

Bruno. (Falling absurdly on his knees.) Forgive me, oh, forgive me, madame! Love alone is guilty! That little demon emptied his quiver into my ardent heart! (*Weeps.*)

Savigny. What is he saying?

Bruno. I couldn't live (*sob*) far from my Adelaide, (*sob*) and I wanted to make madame take me back to Paris. Oh, oh, oh!

Henriette. But these photographs?

Bruno. That's my adored, my beautiful Adelaide, (*sob*) and the other is your humble servant, Bruno! Oh, oh! (*Goes up.*)

Savigny. I begin to understand! We were the puppets, and he pulled the strings! Pleasant! I think, Henriette, we will never mention cousin Maurice again.

Henriette. And as for that Lise Bluet—let us say no more, but get back as fast as we can to our little blonde angel in Paris.

Savigny. "Hurrah for Paris!"

Bruno. "Hurrah for Paris!" I've done it somehow!

(*Comes down L.*)

Savigny. You here! I shall send you back to Normandy, to your father.

Bruno. To father! Farewell, my Adelaide, my Adelaide, farewell! I shall die!

Henriette. (To SAVIGNY.) We are happy ourselves. Let us forgive him,

Savigny. (Laughing.) Very good, The beautiful Adelaide will probably punish him worse than we should.

Bruno. (To the audience.) I'll risk it! Don't you love my Adelaide? Oh, you do? That's right, say so. Then "Hurrah for Paris!"

Disposition of Characters.

HENRIETTE.

C.

M. SAVIGNY.
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